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ABSTRACT

One of a series of teacher-developed curriculum guides designed to encourage student participation and involvement in important social issues, this secondary level guide helps 7th through 12th grade English and social studies educators teach about the election process. An introductory section suggests practical considerations, means of enlisting support, and tips for using role-playing, simulation, and debate in the classroom. Suggestions for a brainstorming activity and three writing activities are presented in the first two sections. The next section emphasizes the role of voting in our society. By focusing on the two-party system, the nominating process, the role of the electoral college, campaign financing, and the language of politics, activities in the fourth section help students understand the U.S. system of representative government. A fifth section deals with issue selection, outside speakers, methodological belief, political demography, the gender gap, and political candidates. Next, students examine influences of the media by analyzing campaign ads, discussing ways that politicians use photo opportunities, and considering the media's influence on election outcomes. The seventh section presents role-playing activities including mock campaign strategy sessions, a mock press conference, and a political debate. The final sections present election and post-election activities. Appendices include a list of Congressional districts in which League of Women Voter debates were held during the fall of 1984, a list of press release guidelines, suggested election issues for students, and a reading on the language of politics. (LP)

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ELECTIONS

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Secondary Teaching Activities in the PARTICIPATION SERIES

SO 016 243

EDUCATORS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

E L E C T I O N S

A Secondary Curriculum In The Participation Series

EDUCATORS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
23 Garden Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138
(617) 492 - 1764

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ABOUT ESR

Educators for Social Responsibility is a national, non-profit membership organization of educators, parents, and other concerned individuals who believe that the nuclear age demands new approaches to education. ESR is committed to presenting divergent views in the classroom on nuclear issues; to dealing with young people's questions and fears about the threat of nuclear war; and to fostering citizen participation in decision-making about the nuclear arms race. ESR researches students' attitudes toward nuclear issues, assesses educational materials, develops curricula, sponsors conferences and professional development programs, and provides speakers and consultation services.

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PREFACE

Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR) believes that presidential and congressional elections provide many opportunities for today's youth to learn about, and participate in, the democratic process. Although most junior high and high school students are not yet of voting age, they are all old enough to become active and informed citizens. This guide provides suggestions for seventh through twelfth grade English and social studies teachers to help them involve their students in learning activities relating to the entire election process.

These activities include analyzing the national and local political debates, researching the campaign issues and strategies, understanding the role of responsible citizens, and participating in a variety of roleplaying activities. These activities will also provide a forum in which teachers and students can wrestle with many important issues which confront citizens who live in a democratic system. Phrased as questions, some of these issues are:

* Why do some people become involved in politics while others do not?

* What are the implications for our democracy of citizens' general lack of participation in the election process?

* Is our political system equitable, and if it is not, how could we improve it?

* What qualities do we look for in our leaders?

* Has there been a change in the kind of leaders we choose?

* Do men and women see leadership differently?

* How can we learn to listen to people whose opinions differ from our own so that we can really appreciate their points of view?

* How do we make decisions when we still have more questions than answers?

* Will our democracy work for us if we do not participate in the political process?

One organization which for many years has helped America understand the election process and election issues is the League of Women Voters. This fall, state and local Leagues are sponsoring a series of debates as part of the League's nationwide Program entitled "Agenda for Security: Election '84." Educators for Social Responsibility applauds this effort to educate voters and urges teachers to incorporate any local or national debates into their courses. Some activities within this guide refer to these debates, and a list of locations of the debates is included as Appendix A.

Although many issues should be presented to students, it is important that we no longer remain silent on the paramount issue facing our students as future citizens -- the prevention of nuclear war. The current world situation and the importance of maintaining US national security make it crucial that foreign policy issues be addressed both in the classroom and in the political arena. For this reason the League of Women Voters has emphasized foreign policy in their debate project. ESR shares this concern and thus occasionally uses national security issues to address the primary goal of this pamphlet: to help us as teachers encourage our students to come to grips with the crucial and difficult issues which face our democracy and to understand and want to participate in our complex political system.

ESR thanks the League of Women Voters Education Fund for its assistance in providing material and suggestions for this guide. We would also like to thank the following organizations for their assistance: American Enterprise Institute, Federal Elections Commission, Friends Committee on National Legislation, George Gallup Organization, and the National Council for the Social Studies.

In writing this teaching guide we have relied extensively on three other ESR guides for ideas about how to involve students in their own education and to encourage them to become active citizens in our democracy. They are:

Decision Making in a Nuclear Age, a 3 to 12 week high school curriculum designed "to promote an understanding of nuclear weapons within the context of human being making choices."

Perspectives: A Teaching Guide to Concepts of Peace, K - 12.

Dialogue: A Teaching Guide to Nuclear Issues, K - 12.

These three curriculum guides are available through the National Office of ESR, 23 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138 (617)492-1764 at a cost per volume of $12.95.

The following educators have read earlier drafts of this guide, and their comments and suggestions have helped us improve it.

Susan Alexander, Associate Director, ESR, Cambridge, MA

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ELECTIONS — FEEDBACK FORM

We see this guide as a work in progress. Your comments, suggestions and additions will help us revise and improve its depth and quality. We would greatly appreciate your taking the time to share your reactions and any new ideas or materials.

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

CITY/STATE/ZIP CODE_____

SCHOOL/ADDRESS_____

SUBJECT_____ AGE/LEVEL_____

1. Which sections of this guide did you use? Which did you find most successful?

2. Which activities worked well for you? Do you have suggestions for improving them?

3. Which activities worked poorly? How could they be improved? Should they be deleted?

4. Overall, how did students react to this material?

5. Did you share this guide with others in your school? What was their reaction?

6. If you have written an activity or have an article that you think should be included, please send it to us. Your contribution will be noted among the list of contributors in the next edition.

ESR
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INTRODUCTION

Educators for Social Responsibility is dedicated to providing a balanced presentation of the crucial issues of our time. By helping students and teachers look at all sides of the issues, ESR believes polarization and bitterness concerning national political debates can be minimized. Although the clash of ideas is necessary to any free and open democratic society, too often the wide divergence of opinion is based on mutual distrust and a lack of real understanding of someone else's point of view. ESR believes that dialogue, rather than argument, is the best method to reach mutually agreeable solutions to the dilemmas we all face. This guide was written to be used first with the 1984 election; however, all activities can be adapted for use in non-election years and in subsequent Congressional and Presidential elections.

We know, however, that seeing the other sides of an issue is not always easy. As individuals, we are deeply influenced by environmental factors, class bias, and social prejudice. It is essential that today's educators teach students to think critically about current issues -- to see through distorted information and ingrained prejudices so as to see more clearly what is fact and what is fiction. A skill as simple as how to listen to what someone says, and what they do not say, and to follow up with appropriate questions, is essential to being a critical thinker. A valuable technique to let students understand different viewpoints is role-reversal. By being asked frequently to reverse roles, students may become sensitized to diverse viewpoints; and by being asked to consider a situation from a third position -- namely that of a detached observer or historian -- students gain yet another perspective. In attempting to reconcile the divergent viewpoints they have heard and expressed in class, students are more likely to search for a broader compromise which incorporates the concerns of all involved. A final way of helping students (and ourselves) understand diverse viewpoints is to engage in "Learning to Believe," an activity based on the ideas of Peter Elbow, through which we suspend our disbelief when listening to a speaker or reading a statement of opinion. This activity will be explained in greater detail in Activity 14.

To help students apply both their believing and critical thinking skills, we feel it is important to provide them with opportunities for confronting major issues so they can become concerned, active citizens and creative leaders. Too many students feel alienated from the political process. It is our goal to demystify the political process and

to challenge students to get involved. It is too easy for both children and adults to sit back and "leave it to the experts." Most issues today require the creativity and participation of every citizen, not just the "experts."

In order to encourage our students to become active citizens, we must engage their interest, teach them to express themselves orally and in writing, and give them enough background on the American democratic system and major issues so that they develop self-confidence and a positive attitude. The future health of a democratic society hinges on nurturing an active rather than passive, younger generation. In an effort to help teachers empower their students, ESR has prepared, under the leadership of its Boston Chapter, a teaching guide called Participation. Participation has separate volumes on Social Studies, Science, and Mathematics for grades 7 - 12, in addition to this volume on the Election Process, and another volume especially for elementary school teachers.

Practical Considerations

While this guide refers to the fall's elections, all activities can be adapted for non-1984 election uses. Most would be valuable as supplements to social studies or English courses. Any activity can be done as a discrete project. if you pick out some of the activities, we suggest that you do them in the order that they are listed since the earlier ones provide a foundation for the later ones. First, read over the entire guide so that you can choose the best sections for your course and the right number of activities for the time you have available. Activity 12 - Issue Selection and Activity 17 - Candidate Watch are especially important because they will allow students to choose the issues which interest them and then to become knowledgeable about the issues through following the candidates. These two activities are prerequisites for many of the later activities.

The amount of time you have available and the flexibility of your English or Social Studies curriculum will also influence your choice of activities from this teaching guide. The actual time each activity will take will depend on such factors as how long you and your students take setting up and debriefing each activity and the age and motivation of your students.

Although there are developmental differences between junior and senior high students, we believe that all of the activities in this guide can be successfully conducted with students as young as seventh graders. Although the most important variable to take into account is, perhaps, the amount of independent research that your students can be expected to carry out, the amount of explanation of issues and presentation of material you have to do will depend also on such factors as the level of political awareness, motivation, and maturity of each class.

A second developmental factor is the changing nature of junior and senior high school students. Since many teenagers are busy "leaving the nest" and developing personalities and values distinct from those of their parents, they may often tend to reject the activities or formats suggested by other adults and authority figures. Thus, it is important not to patronize them, but to engage them actively in planning of your election curriculum. Search for and incorporate their ideas, interests, and values as much as possible. Begin with a discussion about whether they want to do anything in your course on the elections.

One final and difficult developmental concern is that of increased self-consciousness and peer pressure, and the effect these may have on class discussions. With their new ability to consider others' perspectives, junior and senior high school students learn that others have opinions and images of them and their behavior. This may create the threatening realization that the opinions of others carry social weight and have some real consequences for a student's acceptance or rejection of his or her peers. Peer pressure is a powerful influence at this stage; for many students, it determines their behavior and their views of the world. They may actually give themselves over to their peer culture, letting others' views define their own.

This surrender of autonomy manifests itself in changeable attitudes and beliefs so that many students may appear to have no set value systems. A student who takes a strong position on an issue one day may completely alter it the next. Other students become rigid adherents of a particular point of view and become so identified with it that they feel personally attacked when it is criticized. It is important that we understand either manifestation -- students' views need to be accepted, whether they are rigid or shifting.

Class discussion is sometimes difficult, since some students feel that the exposure of their views on controversial issues exposes them to potential ridicule. Many teachers have found in-class written work (short notes, journals, or brief outlines) useful as a prelude to discussion, so that their students can participate in clarifying their views whether they talk or not; students who are silent in classes need help in expressing themselves in other ways. Most important, however, is that students be supported and listened to in our classrooms. The environment for discussion must be emotionally safe; our students need to know we will protect them and their views. (A more complete discussion of the developmental considerations relating to junior and senior high school students appears in ESR's Dialogue on pages 80 - 84.)

Enlisting Support

Parents or administrators may be wary about activities they see as "politically loaded." When issues such as national defense, campaign tactics, and civil rights are addressed in the classroom, parents and administrators are understandably concerned about the dangers of political indoctrination. Be certain to stress the idea of a balanced approach to all issues when presenting your projects to them.

Some parents or administrators may also feel that the "three R's", or reading, writing, and arithmetic, are being sacrificed for a non-essential learning experience. Discuss with them the importance in a democracy of motivating students to become active citizens and ask them about any of reservations about your plans. At the same time point out the many opportunities within these activities for students to refine their reading, writing, researching, and thinking skills. Furthermore, you can point out that the intensive study of written media during these activities may help students develop the habit of reading newspapers and periodicals regularly on their own.

The best way to handle questions and doubts about these activities, however, is to broaden your base and include others in the process. Talk informally with other English or social studies teachers to find out if they may be interested in these activities as well. Faculty teamwork among subject areas and grades, such as seventh and eighth graders or juniors and seniors, can improve the quality of the roleplaying and the success of the activities. Talk to administrators about creating school-wide or grade-wide activities which might be the "hit" of the fall for the school, especially for the students. The larger the scope of the event, the more work they will put into it. It may be helpful to enlist the aid of interested parents. Share your ideas with individual parents or at PTA or other parents' group meetings. Parents can be particularly valuable in suggesting and providing outside speakers and setting up realistic roleplaying situations.

If you are able to enlist enough support that the activity becomes truly unique in its scope or approach, try to publicize it locally. Disseminating these activities will improve the quality of education in your area and enhance the image of your school. Write a letter to the editor of your local paper explaining how your project is helping to create responsible future citizens. For any major activity, send out press releases to local newspapers and to radio and television stations. Make sure to clear such a release with your administrators first. Some helpful hints on writing a press release are included in Appendix B.

Note on Roleplaying, Simulation, and Debates

As pedagogical terms, the words "roleplaying" and "simulation" are somewhat new and subject to varying interpretation. By "simulation" we mean a re-creation of an historical event. There are no activities in this guide which are true historical simulations. On the other hand, many activities do involve "roleplaying." Within many of our activities, students assume either a general role (such as that of a newspaper

reporter or delegate to a national party convention), or the role of a specific person (such as Bob Woodward of the Washington Post or an actual candidate such as Ronald Reagan). Students can either be assigned roles or the teacher can ask for volunteers, but the most important aspect of roleplaying is to assume someone else's point of view, not to pick the perspective which is closest to one's own. In fact, you can have students take on a variety of roles and political positions during your election activities. Roleplaying can give students the opportunity to learn appropriate behavior for various situations, and it is also useful for developing critical thinking, decision making, and assertiveness skills. Encourage all students to take on a role, even if it is only that of an active observer.

In order to create enthusiasm for the roleplaying activities, teachers can allow for some humor and creative realism. Allow students to brainstorm beforehand how to create a realistic situation for their activities. You might suggest that they construct props and costumes, develop proper accents and mannerisms, and research the characters they are to adopt. But above all, you may want to discuss the importance of their "getting into" their roles as much as possible so that they will develop empathy and learn to see the world through someone else's eyes.

During the roleplaying, it is probably best for the teacher not to interrupt except to introduce a new element or fact, or to get things going if they get bogged down. After the activity, you can have a debriefing session where you ask such questions as: Was the roleplaying realistic? How was it similar to or different from real life? Did the activity clarify issues or resolve problem? What could have been done differently? What was it like to live in that person's shoes? How did it affect students' views of others? What did you learn from the experience?

When setting up debates, many of the same procedures and follow-up used in roleplaying can be utilized. Indeed, debates may be enhanced if students roleplay actual people. Since the result of many debates, however, is an increased polarization of viewpoints rather than a successful search for common ground, you may want to stress that you are using debates for the interest they create in the issues and as an opportunity to critique their usefulness in our political process. To avoid polarization, identify more than two positions. After the debate, help students search for the concerns and values that are common to all the positions. You may also want to point out that you are using debates as an exercise in taking other viewpoints and that your students will not necessarily agree personally with the positions they are taking. They may find that by researching and arguing another viewpoint they will come to take it as their own or at least appreciate weaknesses in their own viewpoints.

With any activity which is confrontational you will probably want to emphasize that it is an educational game, not a contest. If students put their egos and personalities on the line in an activity or discussion, they may become adamant about their positions, hostile toward others, and

your class could become polarized. Observing and then talking through such an occurrence can, however, be a very enlightening exercise as well.

Some useful contacts for information about the democratic election process are:

Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 1414 22nd Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037.

Educators for Social Responsibility, 23 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.

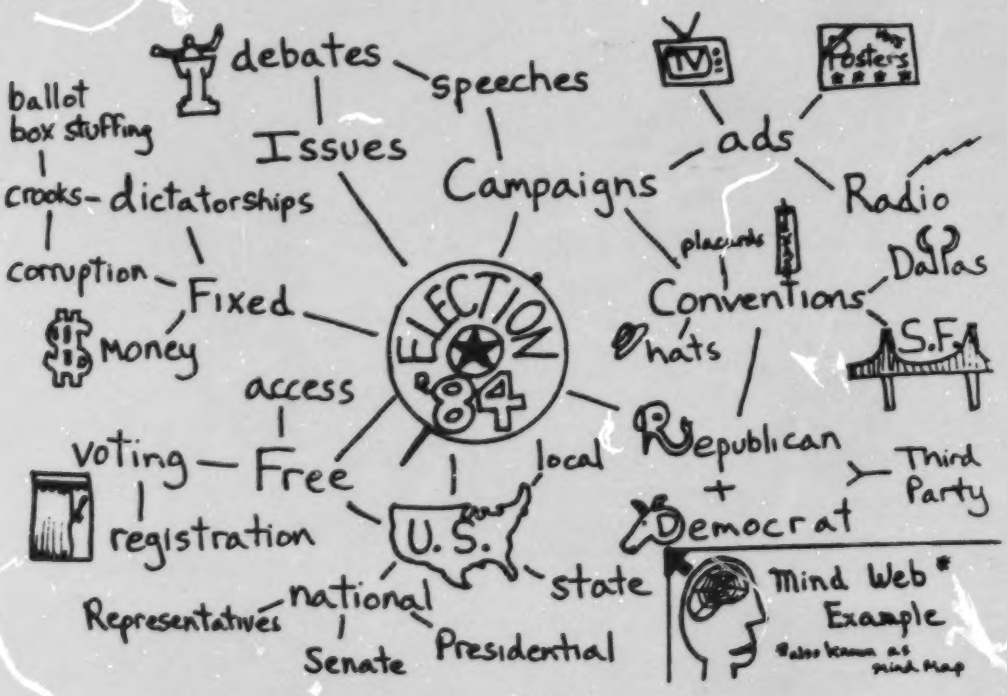
The League of Women Voters, 1730 M Street, NW, Washington,DC 20036.

BRAINSTORMING

Objectives: One of the best ways to create enthusiasm for the activities within this guide is to have your students "brainstorm" -- to express as many ideas as possible about a given subject, using a forum in which their ideas will not be judged, at least not at the outset.

Activity 1 - Brainstorming

Since many students are afraid to speak out for fear of being ridiculed, it is often best to ask for ideas from everyone and write them on the blackboard without evaluation. Start with one idea, such as "Election '84" or "democracy," and have students say what words or phrases they associate with it. Once the list is long enough, discuss with the class how and why these associations were made. Do any appear surprising or in conflict with the traditional images associated with the term? Which aspects interest the class the most? Your students will be more enthusiastic about learning more about these subjects since they thought up the associations themselves.



One alternate way to record the responses in a brainstorming session is by using a "mind web," also known as a web chart or a mind map, in which associated words are written around the central term and connected visually to it or to other words as they come up. Students sometimes will enjoy, and may want to create their own mind webs with symbols and figures such as in the illustration above.

For further reading:
Tony Buzan, Use the Right Side of Your Brain, New York, Dutton, 1973. A highly original book on improving one's study skills through utilizing such innovative techniques as mind maps.

THREE WRITING ACTIVITIES

Objectives: In order to be an effective participant in a democracy as large and diverse as ours, it is not enough to express our views to those around us. Not only can we expand our audience through writing, but we can also use the writing process to clarify and refine our thinking. What follows are three writing activities which can be used in two ways: 1) by themselves as separate classroom activities, or, 2) in conjunction with many of the activities which are presented later in this guide.

Activity 2 - Keeping a Journal

Many teachers and students are discovering what some writers have long known--keeping a journal is a rich and rewarding activity. We can use a journal as a place for observations and reactions to the events in our lives. We can use it for private brainstorming and to reflect on and clarify our thinking. We can also use a journal as a confidant(e) to which we can express our fears and frustrations. As writers, we can keep a journal as a way of learning to write more freely and with greater confidence. Finally, we can use a journal as a source for future writing.

Some general suggestions:

* Student journal keeping is perhaps most successful if journals are considered confidential. Class sharing of journal entries should occur only with the consent of the students sharing. It sometimes works well if the teacher keeps a journal as well, for a teacher's willingness to share entries in class can set a positive tone for the class.

* The students and the teacher may agree to have the teacher read the students' entries on a regular basis. Some teachers have found that it is best if they limit their written "critiques" of student journals to those which encourage students. This will help keep students from becoming too inhibited or self-critical about their journal-keeping activities. Additionally, some teachers decide to write their comments on slips of paper which they insert in the students' journals at appropriate

places so that they do not "violate" the personal integrity of each student's journal.

* Students may also want the option of keeping certain entries confidential. This can easily be done by having the student fold over those pages s/he wants to remain private.

* Ask students to date all journal entries to help them give their journals a sense of chronology and continuity.

* Occasionally, give students time in class for writing in their journals. Ten or fifteen minutes may be enough time if students are encouraged to write freely without worrying about spelling and grammar.

* If journal entries are assigned, they should not be graded for content. It seems to work well to give full credit if all the assigned entries are completed. You may decide to grade final (polished) written pieces which use journal entries as sources.

For further reading:
Peter Elbow, Writing Without Teachers, New York, Oxford University Press, 1973. An excellent book on using journals to improve the quality of one's writing.

Activity 3 - Letter Writing

Through writing letters to an elected official or to a newspaper, students can learn and perfect the skills of clear and concise written communication. In the initial stages of their research on this year's campaign personalities and issues as a part of the activities which follow, students will be encouraged to write to elected officials and candidates for information. As they come to their own conclusions about the issues, it will become appropriate for them to express their opinions on the issues to the candidates and to their local and school newspapers. Finally, after the elections, students may want to continue lobbying their elected representatives about issues which are of continuing concern to them.

Students may question whether writing letters to newspapers and to candidates and elected officials has any effect. You may want to introduce this as the starting point for discussion about this activity. Before writing to a newspaper, you can have the class study letters to the editor from a local newspaper to try to determine why people write such letters. You may also have a student call up the editorial department of the local paper and inquire as to the importance and effect of such letters. You may point out that members of Congress are very interested in the letters they receive, especially if they come from their own constituents. President Kennedy made this comment to a group of editors of national women's magazines in 1963:

I think letters have an effect on members of Congress. Everybody's vote counts in America, but those who sit down and write letters make their votes count more times .... Nothing is more effective than a letter that reflects both an understanding of the question involved and a sincere viewpoint based on that understanding. ("How to Write Members of Congress and the President," Friends Committee on National Legislation, Washington, DC)

Although you may want to provide additional guidelines for writing business letters, the following suggestions which pertain to letters written to government officials may be helpful.

* Spell names and addresses correctly. Some addresses your students may want to use are:

  Senator _____
  Senate Office Building
  Washington, DC 20510

  Representative _____
  House Office Building
  Washington, DC 20515

  President _____
  The White House
  Washington, DC 20501

* Proper salutations would be:

  Dear Senator _____:
  Dear Representative _____:
  Dear President _____:

* A proper closing would be:
  Sincerely yours,

* Be courteous. If you are writing to express your disapproval of a particular action the official has taken or you expect will take, it is particularly important to begin with something positive, so that the recipient of the letter will hear the criticisms as constructive.

* Limit your letter to one topic and one page.

* Be clear and concise.

* If you want a direct answer, ask a direct question. (Ex. "How will you vote on the _____ Bill?")

* Avoid violent language or sarcasm.

* Express your ideas in your own words. Avoid "canned" letters provided by a group or organization trying to gain influence. If you support their position, make their ideas your own.

* Back up your ideas with statistics, sources, etc.

In writing letters to the editor you may also take into account the following suggestions which come from the Friends Committee on National Legislation pamphlet, "How to Write a Letter to The Editor."

* Use a typewriter, if possible, and double space.

* A proper salutation would be:
To the Editor:

* Help supply the facts that you feel were omitted in the news article or editorial to which you are responding.

* Use a personal experience if it supports your point.

* By making appropriate changes you can send the letter to your school or other newspapers.

* Be sure to sign your name, and include your address and phone number.

* Wait for your letter to appear and if it doesn't, try again on the same or another subject.

For further reading:
George Alderson & Everett Sentman, How You Can Influence Congress: The Complete Guide for the Citizen Lobbyist. New York, Dutton, 1979. A very thorough guide.

Friends Committee on National Legislation, 245 Second St., NE, Washington, DC 20002. Assorted short pamphlets for 5 cents each plus postage which include "How to Write Your Congressperson and President" and "How to Write a Letter to the Editor."

League of Women Voters Education Fund, 1730 M St., NW, Washington, DC 20036. "Tell It to Washington: A Guide for Citizen Action Including Congressional Directory 1983 - 84."

Activity 4 - Writing News Articles and Commentaries

In the activities which follow students will be given opportunities to write news articles which provide coverage of their involvement in the various activities. These articles may be assigned as a class exercise, and they may be appropriate for the school newspaper or for an "election

special" publication which chronicles the various election activities in which your students become involved.

Once your students have thoroughly researched and discussed the various issues involved in the local and presidential elections, you may wish to assign them opinion pieces or commentaries on the issues. These commentaries can also be used by the school newspaper or in the "election special" publication.

THE ROLE OF VOTING IN OUR DEMOCRACY

Objectives: This section is designed primarily as a guide to teaching about our election system. It is intended to give background information which you can share with your students and to offer some activities to encourage your students to learn more about the US election system.

In writing this section we relied heavily on two publications from the League of Women Voters, (1730 M St., NW, Washington, DC 20036): Choosing the President, 1984 and "How to Teach the 1984 Elections."

Activity 5 - Who Votes and Why?

Begin by having students interview their parents (and/or their neighbors) about their voting records in local, state and national elections. You may want to begin by brainstorming ideas for a questionnaire which students can then take home to complete. In creating your questionnaire consider the following:

* You may decide to limit your questions to Presidential elections or Presidential and Congressional elections to keep the size of your database manageable.

* Try to obtain information which goes as far back as you can.

* In addition to obtaining information on when their parents voted, have your students find out who their parents voted for (including the candidates' parties), why they chose each candidate, and if their candidate was successful.

* If their parents didn't vote in certain elections or if they never vote, have them find out why.

* You may interview your own parents or include yourself as an interview subject so you will be able to share your results with your students.

* Activities 15 and 16, (Political Demography and Exploring the Gender Gap) will involve polling adults about their opinions on the candidates and the issues involved in the current elections.

Although it would be possible to combine those activities with Activity 5, it is preferable to conduct this poll about past voting patterns first and conduct the other polls later, after your students know more about the candidates and the issues.

* You may, however, have your students ask their parents how they intend to vote in the current elections, as this will provide data to compare with that obtained from your later polls.

Once you and the class have completed your interviews analyze the results of the interviews. What trends, if any, can you discern about why people vote or not? Discuss the limitations of your sample.

Present information yourself or have students research the history of voter participation in elections in the United States and in other democracies, especially those in western Europe. If you feel it is necessary to limit the presentations to the past several decades, make sure that your students know that the declining voter turnout in the United States is largely a 20th century phenomenon. During the late 19th century, voter turnout was as high as it is currently in the democracies of western Europe and Israel.

Consider the following statistics which reflect the percentages of registered voters who voted in three recent Presidential elections:

1960	62.8%
1972	54.3%
1980	53.2%

Note that if these percentages took into account the number of adults in the United States who are not even registered, they would be even lower. If Ronald Reagan won the 1980 election with 52% of the votes cast, figure out together with your students the percentage of adult Americans who actually voted for the winning candidate in 1980 (less than 28%). What are the implications for our democracy when our most important elected official wins with so low a plurality? Why is voter turnout in the Soviet Union (nearly 99%) so much greater than in the United States?

For further reading:

Bruce E. Altshuler, Keeping a Finger on the Public Pulse: Private Polling & Presidential Elections, Westport, CT, Greenwood Press, 1982.

Walter Dean Burnham, The Current Crisis in American Politics, New York, Oxford University Press, 1982.

George H. Gallup, The Sophisticated Poll Watcher's Guide, Princeton, NJ, Princeton Opinion Press, 1972.

League of Women Voters, "1980 Election Retrospective", 1981, #171.

Richard Niemi, et al., eds., Controversies in Voting Behavior, Washington, DC, Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 1984. Includes studies of voter turnout and also studies of voting behavior in some European countries.

Activity 6 - The Importance of Voting

Building on your data and discussion from Activity 5, begin to consider whether it is important for citizens to vote. Have some students research the 1960 and the 1968 Presidential elections and have them focus on how close they were.

You may want to share with your students these other examples of narrow election victories:

* In 1960, 7000 votes in the right places would have changed the outcome in the Presidential election.

* In 1976, in eleven states which together had 25% of the electoral vote, a shift of 7500 votes in each of those states would have changed the outcome of the Presidential election.

* In 1980, thirteen House races were decided by 1500 votes or fewer.

* In 1980, a shift of 45,000 votes in each of five Senate races would have changed the outcome of those races.

Discussion question: What conclusions can be drawn about the importance of voting from your consideration of these four elections as well as the 1960 and 1968 Presidential elections?

Additional ideas:

* Have students collect articles from newspapers and magazines about the importance of voter registration in the current election. Has recognition of the fact that there are large numbers of adults who have not registered to vote affected the campaign strategies of the candidates?

* Have students find out what a citizen must do in order to register to vote where s/he lives. If they have difficulty finding out, discuss the implications of this difficulty for voter turnout.

* Have a student present a brief history of the gradual extension of the right to vote in the US from the time white males (often only landed ones) alone could vote to the present when all citizens over 18 have the franchise. What were the constitutional amendments and the major laws involved? Discuss

whether there are still citizens in the US who are effectively disenfranchised. If so, what is being done to bring them into the democratic process?

For further reading:
See the sources listed at the end of Activity 5.

UNDERSTANDING THE US SYSTEM OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

Following the campaign and election process will be valuable for your students only if they have a background in some of the basics. If they have not got such background in courses and on their own, we suggest that you refer to other sources (the League's Choosing the President, 1984 is excellent as is Elections '84, Congressional Quarterly, 1414 22nd St.,NW, Washington, DC 20037) and/or have students research the areas listed below. These areas for study with some background information given and some activities suggested are intended only as starting points for further study.

Activity 7 - The Two Party System

No President since George Washington has been elected without the support of one of the two major parties. Have some students research and present information on the history of the political parties in the US, highlighting only the important aspects. Did the writers of our Constitution expect that there would be political parties? Was it ever intended that only two parties would be viable? What are the factors behind this?

Both Republican and Democratic parties are organized on the precinct, county, state and national levels and both have Campaign Committees at these levels which help their candidates get elected.

Have other students research and present information on the system of proportional representation used in such countries as Great Britain, France, Sweden and Israel. Discuss whether the systems in these countries allow minor or "third" parties greater opportunity for representation of their views in their country's government, especially if their system allows the possibility of a coalition government. What are the advantages and disadvantages of these models of governments? What are the advantages and disadvantages of our two party system?

Activity 8 - The Nominating Process

Politicians running for the Presidential nomination compete in every state to try to win the most delegates. Each state has its own method of determining how delegates to the national nominating conventions of the major parties will be chosen. The various states use methods such as direct binding primaries, open advisory primaries, caucuses, and

conventions. All the delegates then meet at the national convention (in 1984 Democrats met in San Francisco and the Republicans met in Dallas) and by voting on one or more ballots select the nominee for President.

Have some students research and report on what occurred during the 1984 Presidential nomination process.

Activity 9 - The Role of the Electoral College

In the Presidential election which occurs every four years the candidates vie for the 538 votes of the state electors who are chosen by the voters. Most electors pledge to support the candidates for whom their home state votes. Violations of these pledges are very rare (less than ten cases since 1796), and so in all states except Maine the candidate who wins a plurality of the vote wins all the state's electors. This "winner take all" feature means that a candidate could win an election by popular vote but lose the electoral vote tally. Thus an important campaign strategy could involve concentrating on winning certain states with large numbers of electoral votes. An absolute majority of 270 electoral votes is necessary for one candidate to be elected.

Activity 9A - The Election of 1876

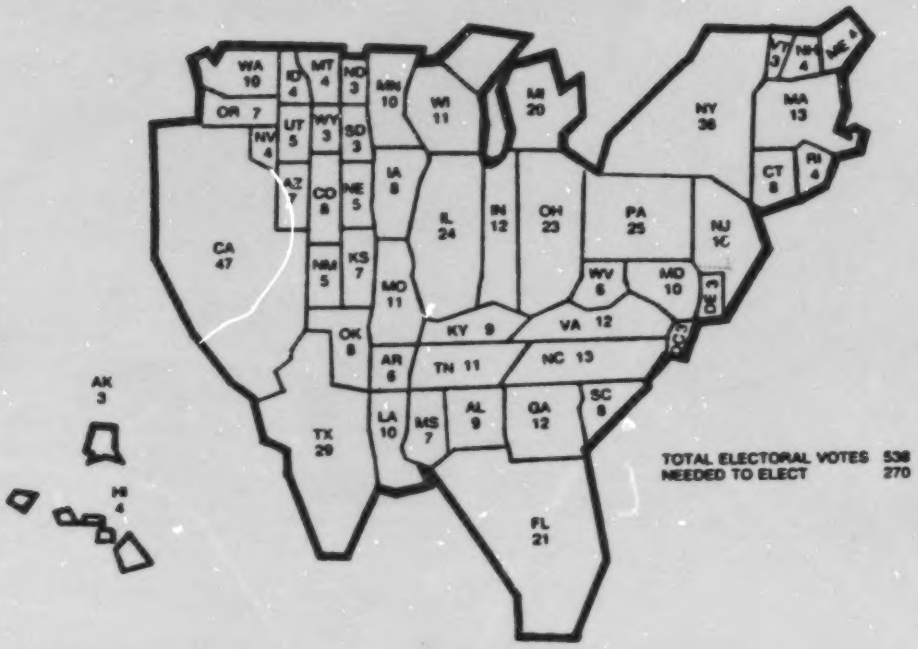
Have some students study the 1876 Presidential election where Samuel J. Tilden won the popular vote but lost the electoral vote, and thus Rutherford B. Hayes became President. Consider also why the Electoral College was created by the founding fathers and why all attempts to abolish it by an amendment to the Constitution have failed.

For further reading:
League of Women Voters, Who Should Elect the President?, 1969, #345. $ .50. A study of the electoral college and various plans for reform.

Activity 9B - Mapping Electoral Votes

Below is a map of the United States with the size of states being determined not by actual land area but by how many electoral votes they carry. Electoral votes are determined by adding the number of senators and representatives a state has. Since that number is determined by the state's population, as a state's population grows, so too does its electoral clout.

The map below was determined by the 1980 census. Have students draw maps which reflect the electoral demographics of 1950, 1960, 1970, or even earlier. Have them predict what this type of map will look like in 1990 or 2000. Ask which areas experienced the greatest change in electoral strength between 1950 and 1980. Can they suggest any reasons for these changes?



For further reading:
Who Should Elect the President? (see reading suggestions for Activity 9).

"How to Teach the 1984 Elections." (see above).

Activity 10 - Campaign Financing

Financial contributions to political campaigns have long been a source of controversy. To give students some idea of the growth and size of campaign expenditures distribute the list of examples below. Note that these selected examples are not meant to imply any specific wrongdoing. Few, if any, politicians survive without heavy spending. Moreover, because the expenditures are not expressed in constant dollars, the real dollar growth is less than it appears to be.

Presidential Election Expenditures

1860 - Lincoln spent an estimated $100,000
1896 - Republicans spent $3 million
1936 - Republicans spent $9 million, Democrats $6 million
1972 - Republicans spent $60 million, Democrats $30 million

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

LIFE July 8, 1920

This political cartoon from 1920 expressed one viewpoint on campaign financing. Show it to your students and ask them to react to it. Do they agree or disagree with the sentiment expressed?

In 1980 the total Congressional, Senatorial, and Presidential campaign expenditures exceeded $1 billion! But even before national elections occur, during the nomination, candidates spend a great deal. Five million dollars were spent by Republican candidates Taft and Eisenhower in 1952, and primary contestants Kennedy, McCarthy, Humphrey, Romney, and Rockefeller spent a stunning twenty-five million in 1968 before their parties' conventions. (Source: Financing Politics: Money, Elections, and Political Reform, by Herbert Alexander).

Discuss whether dangers exist when expenditures are so large. Who pays off the debt? Can private interests buy votes in Congress or favors in the White House? Have students brainstorm where such contributions may come from (individuals, corporations, labor organizations, trade organizations, the candidates themselves). You might point out that one student of campaign finance, Herbert Alexander, contends that although money may be important in helping a person enter politics originally or in winning his or her party's Presidential nomination, the amount of money spent on an actual election can affect the outcome only if the election is extremely close.

In 1971, Congress passed the Federal Elections Campaign Act and by 1975 the Federal Elections Commission had been set up. Because of the

Commission, tough limits on contribution size can be enforced to try to control the effect of money on elections. Have students research what else the Commission does and the limits it has created. Also analyze the FEC's newest worry, Political Action Committees (PACs). Point out to your student that while PACs still supply only a minority portion of all contributions, they contributed $83.1 million to congressional candidates in 1982, and will give out an estimated $120 million in 1984.

For further reading:
Herbert Alexander, Financing Politics: Money, Elections, and Political Reform, 2nd Ed., Washington, DC, Congressional Quarterly, 1980.

Federal Elections Commission, Public Communications Office, 1325 K St., NW, Washington, DC 20463. Toll free: 1(800)424-9230. Write or call for a series of free publications, including "Campaign Guide for Congressional Candidates and their Committees," "Campaign Guide for Presidential Candidates and their Committees," and "Federal Election Campaign Laws."

Activity 11 - The Language of Politics

This activity may be found in Appendix D. In Activity 11 you will have the opportunity to explore the way language and politics mix by working with your students on the following topics.

* euphemism and circumlocution
* using emotion to distract or convince
* oversimplification (exaggeration, statistical distortion, stereotyping, labeling and guilt by association)
* discussion versus argument
* assumptions and biases

We believe that the various exercises in Activity 11 make an excellent introduction to the activities which follow and directly concern the current elections. We put Activity 11 in Appendix D, however, because it is long, and we did not want to interrupt the flow between the shorter activities in the guide. We suggest that you read through The Politics of Language, and as you have done with the other activities in this guide, choose those sections which are of greatest interest to you and your students.

TRACKING THE ELECTIONS

Objectives: to clarify in your students' minds what the major issues are; to increase students' knowledge of issues and to expose them to outside sources and experts; to be an ongoing project to educate students about the candidates' backgrounds and their positions on key issues; to provide information for activities which follow.

Activity 12 - Issue Selection

Begin this section with a brainstorming session. Ask the class what issues they see as important campaign issues and try to group similar or related issues. Some suggestions with which you could supplement your list include: civil rights, consumer issues, education, environment, health and welfare, inflation, industrial planning, labor relations, law and order, social security, tax reform, trade protectionism, and any of the security or foreign policy issues suggested by the League of Women Voters for their political debates.(See Appendix C)

Once the issues have been selected, have the students list them according to what they see as high priority issues for the 1984 election. Using their journals, have students reflect on why they chose the issues they did. Discuss what connections these issues have to their own lives.

Along with your class, choose those issues which you want to focus on in the activities which follow. The number you choose will depend on the amount of time you have for these activities and the motivation and maturity of your students.

Activity 13 - Outside Speakers

Explore with your students the wide range of possible speakers you might invite to your class, or to the school if you decide to arrange an assembly. Have the class president or a responsible student use the proper letter writing techniques described earlier in this guide to invite a prominent speaker chosen by his or her classmates. Possible areas in which to search for speakers include: colleges and universities, political offices, government agencies, law offices, and public interest groups. Make sure not to overlook parents and alumni(ae).

Before the speaker comes, prepare both your guest and your students. Explain to your speaker the size, maturity, and interest of your class, as well as the type of election activities they will be engaged in. Also, clarify the format (speech, question and answer, debate, panel, or a combination) and the time allotted. Prepare your class by pointing out general rules of politeness, while also emphasizing the critical thinking skills stressed earlier. Students will be more interested if they are listening not only for information, but for bias and assumptions as well. Appendix D - The Language of Politics contains a discussion of how to recognize and deal with a person's biases and personal assumptions. Share the following five hints from Appendix D with your students.

* Examine underlying assumptions, determine what is implied and what is not being said.

* Determine the objectivity of the presenter: what is the presenter's nationality, profession, affiliation?

* Determine the values of the presenter: what ends does s/he seek?

* Determine the level of the appeal: is it aimed at emotion and sympathy, or intellect and reason?

* Examine the evidence: is there a balance of information, is it complete or selective?

You might also want to have the class do some background study of the speaker and his or her area of expertise. After the speaker has left school, allow for an open and frank discussion of the event.

For further reading:
Dialogue: A Teaching Guide to Nuclear Issues, Boston, ESR, 1983. There is an especially good discussion of the use of outside speakers on pp. 131-133.

Activity 14 - Learning to Believe

An alternate way of using speakers would be to invite two or more people who represent divergent viewpoints on an issue and engage in what Peter Elbow terms "methodological belief." Elbow suggests that in the course for our search for knowledge, we first must learn to believe before we can doubt. Modern man, however, has become extremely adept at doubting (sometimes called "critical thinking"). This method of doubting (i.e. methodological doubt) is a very useful skill as we know from our recent use of it in Activity 13. According to Elbow our methodological doubt must be balanced by methodological belief.

We engage in methodological belief by really trying to believe the position which is being advanced by the presenter. If we have doubts while we are listening we ask ourselves to try to believe the idea being offered. Elbow says:

> The goal is not to give people permission to continue believing what they already believe or find comfortable, but rather to force them to try to believe what they find difficult or unwelcome....What makes this process different from most academic inquiry is that we are not trying to construct or defend [or tear down!] an argument but rather to transmit and experience, enlarge a vision. (Elbow, "Critical Thinking Is Not Enough", Reninger Lecture, University of Northern Iowa, April 1983, p. 6.)

After the presentation (or during if there is the opportunity) we may ask questions only of the sort which will help us believe the position espoused by the speaker. Here, you can be extremely helpful in making sure that the questions are not argumentative. For the method to work you must be willing to help such a questioner rephrase the question so that it is not an attack, but rather is asked in order to help the questioner understand the position of the presenter. For example, if a student asks, or implies by his tone, "What is your basis for such a crazy conclusion?", you can help the student rephrase the question as "Can you help me understand how you reached that conclusion?".

At first, it may seem odd or not sufficiently rigorous to use methodological belief in listening to the ideas of others. But done properly, it can expand our understanding of complex problems so that we do not seek simple solutions to them. Elbow summarizes:

> Methodological doubt or critical thinking represents the human struggle to free ourselves from parochial closed mindedness, but it doesn't go far enough. It too often helps us argue against new or unfamiliar or threatening ideas without really experiencing them or feeling their force. It caters too comfortably to our impulse to protect and retain the views we already hold. The discipline of methodological belief comes to the rescue at this point. It doesn't mean slipping back into the comfortable tendency to believe only what's easiest or most natural to believe, it means trying to believe what's hardest, trying to believe a whole range of disparate ideas that don't fit with each other, and trying to believe what violates our own convictions. It advances further the struggle against parochial closed mindedness. (Ibid., p. 8.)

In setting up a situation where you and your students can practice methodological belief, it seems to work best if you invite the speakers at separate times so that they will not have the opportunity to engage in debate with one another. Discuss the principles of methodological belief thoroughly with your students beforehand, and remind them that the object of the exercise is to try to believe the ideas of another person.

As an introduction, you might try having them read a short piece which expresses a point of view with which you think most of them will

probably disagree. You can then roleplay the author of the piece and entertain "believing" questions.

Undoubtedly, this activity will seem difficult at first for you and your students, but if you practice it diligently and apply it to a variety of situations (watching movies, listening to political speeches, listening to or reading the writing of others), you will find that your thinking will become more complicated and less predetermined.

For suggestions about how to go about getting speakers, see Activity 13 - Outside Speakers.

For further reading:
Peter Elbow, "Critical Thinking Is Not Enough", Reninger Lecture, University of Northern Iowa, April 1983.

Peter Elbow, Writing Without Teachers, New York, Oxford University Press, 1973. (appendix essay)

Activity 15 - Political Demography (Making Profiles of Congressional Districts)

Objectives: To introduce students to political demography, the statistical study of populations for political purposes; to give students the opportunity to conduct demographic research, including the use of student voter surveys, on their local congressional district(s) and to conduct demographic research on selected congressional districts throughout the United States; to help students understand past voting patterns and to make predictions about future ones; to expose students to the sociological diversity of the United States electorate.

Have some students engage in Activity 15A - Profiling Local Congressional Districts. Have other students engage in Activity 15B - Profiling Other Congressional Districts Around the United States. You may decide to limit your students to Activity 15A. In any case do Activity 15C- Creating a Mock TV News Show, which will provide students with an opportunity to present the results of their research in an engaging format and will supplement the written profiles they have created. If you have not already done so, complete Activity 12 - Issue Selection, as it will be helpful for this activity.

Activity 15A - Profiling Local Congressional Districts

Have students research the sociological composition of their local district(s). They will probably want to include such factors as income, employment, age, religion and ethnic background. Students should also research party affiliation and past voting patterns. An excellent source for this research is Michael Barone and Grant Ujifusa, Almanac of American Politics, Washington, DC, National Journal, 1984. Other good sources of information would include the office of the local Congressional representatives (see letter writing suggestions in Activity 3) and the state and local offices of the League of Women Voters.

After creating a written questionnaire, have students conduct their own polls of registered voters within their local congressional districts. Start by brainstorming questions for the written questionnaire. See Appendix D - The Language of Politics which explores how the formulation of the questions will affect the answers, and Activity 1 - Brainstorming. Students may want to include questions on what the voters think are the most important election issues, on their views on certain issues, and on the candidates and for whom they plan to vote for Congress and for the Presidency. The questionnaire might also include questions on age, sex, income, employment, religion, ethnic background, party affiliation, and past voting record. By comparing this new data with the results of their research conducted in Activity 15A, students can predict if the voters polled are representative of their districts, and how useful the polls will be in predicting the outcome of the election. Be sure to look at Activity 16 - Exploring the Gender Gap, to get ideas about how a voter's sex might affect the way s/he views the candidates and the issues.

Every town or city hall has a voting list and census data that is public record. This material could be useful in contacting voters for the profile. This voter survey may be conducted by phone, canvassing neighborhoods, or setting up tables at local shopping centers or public places. As part of the voter survey students may conduct "people on the street" interviews, in which they record the results of their interviews, perhaps using a tape recorder, and print them in a class, school, or "election special" newspaper. The results of these interviews can also be used in the "News Show", which is described in Activity 15C.

For further reading:
Karl A. Lamb, As Orange Goes: Twelve California Families and the Future of American Politics, New York, Norton, 1974. About Orange County, California and its political demography.
See also references listed at the end of Activity 5.

Activity 15B - Profiling Other Congressional Districts Around the United States

Note: Because the research required for this activity may be more difficult than that required for Activity 15A - Profiling Local Districts, this activity is especially suited for more advanced students.

Activity 15B enables students to apply their voter profiling techniques to districts beyond their own and will help them understand the diversity of the United States electorate. As mentioned above, you may want to divide the class so that some conduct research on the local district(s) - Activity 15A - and others conduct research on districts throughout the United States.

First, using the Almanac of American Politics or other similar reference works (see "For further reading" section below), choose enough districts so that the class can research them individually or in teams of two or three. You may want to allow students to choose districts where they have friends or relatives as this will make their research more

enjoyable and rewarding. Make sure you end up with districts which are both geographically and sociologically diverse.

Then through research have the students create a profile of their district. This research will yield information about the geographical description, major business activities, sociological composition of the voters, their past voting patterns, party affiliation, the current congressional race and the important issues. Sources for this research, in addition the Almanac of American Politics, may include information from the incumbent Congressperson and his or her opponent in the upcoming race, the state or local chapter of the League of Women Voters, local newspapers from the districts and information from friends and relatives who live in the area. One source of addresses for newspapers around the United States is the Editors and Publishers Directory.

If your students write the circulation department of the newspaper in which they are interested and explain why they need the paper, they may be able to arrange a special rate.

In the profile students may be able to make predictions about the outcome of the local congressional election. As with the profiles created in Activity 15A, these profiles may be written, and/or they may be presented to the class through the next activity.

For further reading:
See the references listed at the end of Activity 15A.

Activity 15C - Creating a Mock TV News Show

The students' research on local and selected congressional districts throughout the United States in Activity 15A and/or 15B can now serve as a basis for a mock TV News Show, with an anchorperson (perhaps the teacher), local reporters who present the results of their research on the local congressional district(s) and other reporters who can "broadcast" from the remote locations about which they did their research. Try to create a realistic roleplaying situation. Maps and charts would be a valuable addition. Watch television news shows to get ideas and see the "Note on Roleplaying, Simulations and Debates" in the Introduction.

After the news show, which may take a couple of periods depending on the number of districts covered and the size of the class, have the class discuss what it learned from its research and the news show. What new insights did students gain about the people in their district(s) and in the country as a whole? What did the students learn about the political process? What predictions are they able to make (if any) about which candidates will win the presidential election and the local elections they studied? Can they predict any changes in the political composition of the next congress?

After the actual election, have the class conduct a "post-mortem" about the predictions they made. Why were they accurate or inaccurate?

Journal keeping - You may want students to keep journals throughout these three related activities, but we think it would be especially useful if students used their journals to record their reactions to the direct polling they conduct in Activity 15A and their reactions to and conclusions from the mock TV News Show, Activity 15C.

News Articles - These activities may be the source of newspaper articles for the school or "Election Special" newspaper.

For further reading:
League of Women Voters, "How to Draw a Political Profile of Your Community", in "How to Teach the 1984 Elections",p. 2.

Activity 16 - Exploring the Gender Gap

Recent polls and historical analysis point to the fact that on many issues and in many elections men and women no longer think and vote the same way. You may find it valuable to explore with your students the history of this "gender gap" and its implications for the current elections.

Have some students research the history of the gender gap. When did women begin to vote in large numbers in ways that are different from men? Why? Has the gap grown steadily or has it fluctuated from election to election? On what issues and for which candidates were there significant differences in viewpoints between men and women? Why?

Have students begin by interviewing their parents about their voting in past elections, their views on the current issues, and how they intend to vote in the upcoming election.

(Note: Students may have completed these interviews already as part of Activity 5 - Who Votes and Why? or Activity 15 - Political Demography (Making Profiles of Congressional Districts).

Activity 17 - Candidate Watch

Let students choose or be assigned a specific candidate to watch in the media. Depending on how extensive a project you want this to be, have students collect information individually or in groups. For example, you could have ten students watch one candidate and have each student be responsible for one of the ten highest priority issues selected in Activity 12. Students who focus on one issue could then be "experts" in that area in many of the activities which follow. Have students collect information by clipping written articles and taking notes on news shows, especially panel format shows such as "Face the Nation". They could then write essays, give oral reports, or create a bulletin board display about their candidate.

If students create profiles on individual candidates, have them take into account the following ideas: the candidate's educational, political, religious, ethnic background; what groups and people back him; personal wealth and financial backers; and if s/he is an incumbent,

analyze his or her past voting record and sponsorship of legislation. Students can contact such organizations as Common Cause, the American Enterprise Institute, the Sierra Club, the Heritage Foundation, etc., to get their ratings of the candidates' records.

Students should keep up their candidate watch throughout their study of the election. The candidate watch may be readily combined with journal writing and the creation of an "Election Special" publication. At the beginning of the candidate watch it may be useful to have your students do some of the Activities in the MEDIA STUDIES section (Activities 18 - 23) to enhance their understanding of the effect the media can have on the public's perception of a candidate. The information collected during the candidate watch will be necessary for the MAJOR ROLEPLAYING ACTIVITIES (mock campaign strategy sessions, mock press conference, and debate) which follow the MEDIA STUDIES section.

MEDIA STUDIES

Objective: To give students an appreciation of the role the media plays in our election system and to motivate them to analyze the effect of the media on the 1984 election.

Activity 18 - Analyzing Campaign Ads

One cause of the high cost of political campaigns is the high cost of advertising. During the pre-nomination period the political field is often narrowed simply because some candidates can no longer afford the expense and must drop out. Have students contact the local offices of candidates and interview media specialists or campaign managers about the cost and strategy of advertising. Students can then begin to analyze the following aspects of campaign advertising:

* Is the content of political radio, television and print campaign ads substantive? Does the content deal with issues? Do the ads emphasize style? What image does each seek to project?

* How frequent are campaign commercials, especially right before the election, and which candidate has the most? During what times of the day, and during which programs, do the ads occur? Have the students then try to explain at what social groups the politicians are aiming. Analyze the music, the setting and the script.

* How do the advertisements identify themselves? Are they labeled? Do they state their bias? (FEC regulations require a statement on who paid for the ad.)

If you or your students have access to a video cassette recorder (VCR), record several ads from television and review them together as a class.

Activity 19 - How Politicians Use Photo Opportunities, Press Conferences and Debates

Candidates, especially incumbents, also have other opportunities to use the media to their advantage. We suggest that more able students do independent research on politicians' use of photo opportunities, press conferences, and debates to improve their image. This study will prove valuable when students become involved in later activities, such as mock press conferences and debates. You might also have students do research on how politicians use the media to gain or maintain power. Consider such historical examples as Franklin Roosevelt's fireside chats and his reluctance to be photographed in his wheel chair, Richard Nixon's "Checkers" speech, the Kennedy-Nixon debates in 1960, and President Reagan's press conferences.

Activity 20 - The Media's Influence on Election Outcomes

Of course, it is not always the candidates who are in control of the media. The media itself has a profound influence on the outcome of primaries and elections. Journalists and broadcasters can generate a sense of impending doom or inevitable victory concerning any political hopeful. They can mold images, define issues, and keep politicians honest by holding them up to public scrutiny. Even though the ideal objective reporter should report the "truth," as Walter Lippmann commented, "news and the truth are not the same thing." (Walter Lippmann, Public Opinion, New York, The Free Press, 1965, p. 226, originally published in 1922). Listed below are four possible reasons why the "truth" does not get reported and a corresponding activity for each. Students may explore these problems and their effects on the 1984 election. A good way to begin this activity would be to brainstorm ideas about what "truth" is and have an open-ended discussion about it. You may have your students participate in each of these four activities or you can divide the class into groups which can report the results of their endeavors to the class.

Time and space limitations -- Practical concerns such as broadcasting costs and viewer concentration span require that TV, radio, and print media compress what they relate and throw out stories not "newsworthy" enough. Have students time local or national newscasts and plot out how much time is allotted to various news areas (such as national and local politics, disasters, crime, public interest, sports, weather, etc.) over the course of a week. Have students call local reporters to interview them on what news gets thrown out and why. Have students analyze the front pages of various newspapers as well. How do they differ in photo choice, headline, and story emphasis?

Sensationalism -- The news services of the visual and print media do not operate in a vacuum. They are involved in a very competitive business where attracting viewers or readers is often done by making their presentations "flashy." Have students study news broadcasts and newspapers, keeping in mind the following questions: What words are chosen to report an incident? Are they colorful? Accurate? Concerning the political campaigns, how much does media focus on personalities? How

closely does it examine issues? Is conflict or polarization exaggerated in order to create excitement? Is sensationalism good or bad?

Political Bias -- Television news departments can color the news with their perspective, just as any individual does with his or her personal bias. Have students research the Equal Time provision, Section 315 of the Federal Communications Act which requires broadcasters to make an equal amount of time available to each candidate for non-paid political coverage. Compare how, despite this law, different networks choose how much to focus on each candidate in its newscasts, which are exempt from the equal time provisions. Mention that in 1972 Nixon supporters accused the media of bias by focusing too much on McGovern's campaign.

Timing -- In an effort to get the story first, reporters often can affect political outcomes by seeing how quickly they can predict the results of the elections. On election day, exit polls, analyses of a sample precinct, are used to estimate the full election results well before all polling places are closed. What kind of an effect might this have on the election? What if the reports were inaccurate? Have students discuss these issues and conduct research on:

* the 1980 election where there was concern that early projections of a Reagan victory kept California Democratic voters away from the polls and affected the results of the California congressional elections.

* the history of election predictions including the Gallup and Harris polls. Be sure to have students research the 1948 Dewey - Truman election in which Truman embarrassed the pollsters.

For further reading:
Herbert J. Gans, Deciding What's News: A Study of the CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek and Time, New York, Vintage (Random House), 1980. This is also a good source for the various parts of Activity 15.

Patterson, The Mass Media Election, New York, Preager Publishers, 1980. The impact of the mass media on the presidential election campaigns.

MAJOR ROLEPLAYING ACTIVITIES

Objectives: to increase students' understanding of the candidates' need to adapt their political views to the political realities of their district and the attitudes of their constituents; to help develop compromise and negotiating skills; to help students understand the roles politicians and journalists play in politics through student participation in a mock press conference; to understand the pressures under which the participants in actual press conferences must operate; to understand the attributes and limitations of a press conference as a means of informing the public about politicians (including candidates) and their stands on the issues; to give students the opportunity to refine their understanding of issues and to hone their public speaking skills. If you have not done so already, consider assigning Activity 19 - How Politicians Use Photo Opportunities, Press Conferences and Debates; to improve public speaking skills and the ability to think under pressure; to learn about a traditional debate format and its strengths and weaknesses in educating the public; and to act as a preface or follow up to watching and analyzing a real political debate.

Activity 21 - Mock Campaign Strategy Sessions

Create a realistic roleplaying situation (see "Note on Roleplaying, Simulation and Debates" in the Introduction.) with two or more students acting as the major candidates. This roleplaying can focus on the national, state, or local level. To each candidate assign one campaign manager and five to ten campaign "experts." Each "expert" may focus on an issue or group of issues s/he has been following in the Activity 17 - Candidate Watch, taking into account any demographic information students may have gathered from Activity 15, but also considering their own and their opponents stance on issues. Have each candidate and team mold a strategy; in doing so they should consider the following questions:

* What issues do my constituents want me to confront the most?
* What issues do I need to stay away from? How will my opponent attack me?
* On what issues is my opponent most vulnerable?
* To whom should I look in soliciting campaign funds?

* At whom should I target my campaign ads?

Follow up this activity by having the class compare the strategies they came up with for each candidate who was roleplayed with the actual strategies that the actual candidates are using. Discuss which strategies seem more effective and make suggestions to improve both campaigns.

As an alternative or supplement to Activity 21, you could invite a high level campaign worker for a local candidate and question her or him on the election strategy for their candidate. Use the above questions to help you think up questions for the visitor. It would also be worthwhile to find out how your visitor got involved in politics and what political work is like.

Activity 22 - Mock Press Conference

Observation - Have students observe actual press conferences given by various politicians including presidential and congressional candidates. You may assign your students to watch a particular press conference on television at home or you may arrange to have one videotaped for viewing in class. With an eye to the mock press conference which you will be setting up have the students observe the following:

* Setting and players - the set-up of the room or TV studio, the placement of the players, their attire, and their demeanor.

* Format - the style of the politician's prepared statements and the kinds of questions asked by the reporters. Who does what when?

* The politician's control of the presentation - by selecting the length and specificity of his or her response; by selecting the reporters who get to ask questions; and by limiting follow up questions and thus limiting dialogue.

You may want students to record their observations (perhaps in their journals) and then discuss them in class. You may be able to get a reporter who has covered press conferences come to discuss his or her experiences with the class.

Creating a mock press conference - Choose the actual politician who will be "giving" the press conference and the issues about which s/he will be responsible for fielding questions. Pick a single student to roleplay the politician or pick several students to roleplay the same politician, but have them limit their presentations and answers to one particular issue.

If you choose several students to roleplay the politician, one might give a general opening statement on the selected issues while the others could answer the specific question from reporters on each issue. To help the audience keep track of who is playing the role of the

politician you can have them pass a hat or a placard with the face of the actual politician on it.

Reporters should be responsible for asking questions only on one issue. It might make sense to choose students to roleplay the politician and the reporters based on the expertise they have developed on the individual issues during their earlier participation in Activity 17 - Candidate Watch.

Set up your class room so that it resembles a room set up for a press conference. Tablecloths, signs and political insignia can add a realistic flavor to the mock press conference.

Have the students dress up appropriately. You may ask individual students to roleplay local or national particular reporters from specific news organizations. Some students may also act as photographers who will later display their photographs for the class. If you have access to video equipment and students who know how to use it, you can have them record the press conference. Such a recording can be useful in stimulating later discussion about the activity.

A possible format for the mock press conference would be to have the politicians give a three-minute opening statement and then select the reporters to ask questions. If you have decided to have several students roleplay the politician, have the politician who gave the opening statement select the reporters to ask the questions, assign his or her expert "alter-ego" to answer it. One follow up question will be allowed. It is important that the politician selecting the reporters not allow a reporter to ask a second set of questions before all the other reporters have been given a chance to ask their questions.

Follow up - Discuss what went well and how the mock press conference could have been improved. Was it realistic? Is a press conference a useful tool in political process? How could it be improved?

Activity 23 - Are Debates Helpful?

It would be extremely useful for this activity to be tied into the observation and analysis of an actual political debate. Pick a Presidential or a local congressional debate that will be televised or arrange to attend one of the Congressional debates sponsored by the state and local Leagues of Women Voters. Check Appendix A for a list of locations of the League sponsored debates (some of which will be televised), and call your local chapter for assistance in viewing their debates. Watching a League sponsored debate would be especially useful if you decide to roleplay congressional or senatorial debate instead of a presidential debate.

Have your students watch the debate and take notes regarding the effectiveness of the debate in helping voters decide for whom they will vote. To help prepare your students for analyzing the debates refer to the Language of Politics section of this guide in Appendix D, as well as the "Observations" section of this debate Activity. Personal preference

and time considerations should help you decide whether your students will view the actual debate before or after they create their own. Instead of having students view the actual debate on television at home, you might arrange to tape it through the school if the proper audio-visual equipment is available.

Be sure to re-read our "Note on Roleplaying, Simulations and Debates" in the Introduction.

Set-Up - Choose two students of fairly equal ability to roleplay two major candidates on the local, state or national level. Have them prepare arguments on a single selected issue. Use a podium to create a realistic situation in the classroom. Assign someone to be a time keeper with flash cards, giving the time left in thirty second intervals.

With more advanced students, it might be valuable to have the students play candidates opposite from the side they have been working on. This abbreviated role-reversal would broaden the students' understanding of the complexity of the situation.

Format - Although you can adjust the format and times to best fit your limitations, we recommend that you keep the speaking time short and allow time for discussion. We suggest the following format:

Candidate A - 4 minute general speech
Candidate B - 2 minute opportunity to question opponent

Candidate B - 4 minute general speech
Candidate A - 2 minute opportunity to question opponent
Candidate B - 2 minute conclusion
CandidateA- 2minuteconclusion

Observations - Have the class discuss the effectiveness of the debate in communicating information to the viewer. Discuss the pros and cons of the debate. Below are some possible ideas you could add to your students observations.

Pro: concise; shows head to head confrontation; exciting and colorful; demonstrates ability of candidates to perform under pressure.

Con: polarizes the issues and blocks dialogue; time restrictions too great (too structured); emphasizes style over content; mixes personalities into the process.

Follow up - Spend some time on, or assign for homework -perhaps as a journal assignment - considering other methods than a debate which might be better suited for informing the public. The League has several formats from which its local chapters can choose in setting up their debates. Have a student ask the local chapter of the League about the pros and cons of the various debate formats.

ELECTION WEEK ACTIVITIES

Objectives: to give students the opportunity to refine their thinking and give written expression to their opinions and conclusions about major political issues; to encourage them to disseminate their opinions to a wider audience and to show them that their ideas can make a difference; to encourage students to think carefully about what they personally believe are the priority issues of the election; to get students to rank the candidates according to the issues as well as leadership style; to give students a taste of what it is like to "pull the lever"on election day; to create a sense of anticipation about the real election.

Activity 24 - Issue Commentaries

By this point in their participation in the activities offered by this guide, and through their observation and analysis of the local and national political scenes, students should be ready to express their opinions and conclusions about the candidates and the issues in the form of polished written commentaries.

Looking for Models -- As they may have done in Activity 17 - Candidate Watch, have students collect commentaries which would include editorials, letters-to-the-editor, and opinion pieces by columnists and others to serve as models for their own written commentaries on the issues.

Writing the Commentaries - Once they have picked an issue, the style of the commentary will depend in part on what sort of publication they are seeking for it.

Publication possibilities:

* Letters-to-the-editor - Commentaries written as letters can be sent to the school paper, local and national newspapers, and local and national magazines. Newspapers and magazines are more likely to publish your letter if it is a timely response to a recent editorial,

letter, or column. See Activity 3 - Letter Writing for suggestions on writing letters-to-the-editor.

* With some modifications the letter-to-the-editor can also be sent to the students' senators or congressional representative. You can ask your representative to have your letter printed in the Congressional Record. Your chances of having your elected representative publish your letter in the Congressional Record are increased if he or she agrees with your position.

  See Activity 3 for suggestions on writing letters to public officials.

* Creating your own "election special" newspaper or magazine -- your class may want to publish their commentaries in a newspaper or magazine of their own design. Letters and columns can be grouped according to the issues they address and as representing disparate points of view. If the class has engaged in other activities, some students can add news articles to the paper or magazine. You may decide to publish several "election specials" throughout the fall, ending with an election follow up after the elections have been held.

Activity 25 -Rating the Candidates

Begin by having students brainstorm what they think are the important issues in the elections they have been following if they have not already done so in Activity 12 - Issue Selection. It may be simplest to pick one race at a time. Then have each student make a list of the five issues which s/he considers most important and rank them in terms of their importance. Next have each student determine which candidate's position is closest to his or her own on each issue.

Now, have students brainstorm and discuss the leadership qualities which they seek in an elected official. Do they vary depending on the office sought? If a candidate has not had much experience in public office, then you and your students may have to rely on how s/he appears in his or her campaign. In your discussion you might consider such factors as:

* Decisiveness
* Ability to inspire
* Ability to attract a competent staff
* Accessibility to the public
* Qualifications and experience
* Openness when questioned
* Ability to change and admit failure

Now have your students rank the qualities according to how important they think each one is and rank the candidates according to how he or she fulfills each quality.

Without referring to these issues and leadership rankings which they have just done, have your students pick the candidate they prefer. Now have them see if their choice is consistent with their rankings. Discuss why there may be inconsistencies. Is it because the ranking system we used was faulty? Does it reflect on the way we choose our leaders?

For further reading;
League of Women Voters, "Pick A Candidate", Pub. # 259, 1984.

Marlene Cohn, "How To Teach the 1984 Elections", League of Women Voters, published by the National Council for the Social Studies, Washington, D.C., 1984.

Activity 26 - Straw Polls and Predictions

On or just before election day, create a voting booth or a voting box and get your class or entire school to vote for the candidate of their choice. Make the situation realistic by insuring privacy and accurate and neutral tabulation. You might consider setting up the voting area in the hall or cafeteria with "poll watchers" in charge.

Once the voting is complete and tabulated (try to do this before the actual election results appear) allow the students to discuss the results and make predictions about the real election. Discuss why your school or class voted as it did. Can they make any conclusions about the "voting profile" of the school?

POST-ELECTION ACTIVITIES

Objectives: to encourage students to continue trying to influence their elected representatives; to compare predictions with results; and to help students envision their future.

Activity 27 - Accountability

Over the course of the year encourage students to continue lobbying the politicians with whom they have become familiar. Immediately after the election, write them to let them know that you are remembering their campaign promises. (See Activity 3 - Letter Writing.)

Activity 28 - Post-Mortem on Predictions

Have students compare the actual voting results with their predictions in Activity 15 - Political Demography and Activity 26 - Straw Polls and Predictions. Can the students explain why there were any differences? (If there are no differences, you should give them the day off or throw a party!) What new voting trends or political changes do the results reveal?

Activity 29 - Envisioning the Future

In a world which is as fast-moving and volatile as ours, it is often true that students tend to avoid thinking of the future. The danger of nuclear and conventional war, as well as ever-shrinking natural resources, makes it difficult for much of our youth to picture a bright future. As a result, the "live-for-today" attitude keeps some students from seriously acting to mold their future world. The series of specific ideas below, taken from ESR's Dialogue curriculum are some good ways to have students start thinking more positively about their future.

Twenty Years Hence: 2003

* Have students design and write a front page of a newspaper for the year 2003.

* Have each student write a story in which he/she is the main character. The story should take place 20 years from now and should include specific references to what their lives are like.

* Ask students to list four things about the fall of 2003.
  1) what do they think will have happened to them personally?
  2) what will have happened to the world?
  3) what do they fear will happen in the world?
  4) what would they like to have happen in the world and to them personally?

* Ask students to write or discuss five things they would like to change about the world right now.

* Have students draw a picture of what they think the future will look like and a picture of what they would like it to be like. Discuss any differences between the pictures.

* Have students write in their journals a paragraph or a list of statements about what they would like the world to be like when they become adults. Encourage them not to censor their ideas as impossible or too idealistic. The purpose is to create a vision.

* Ask students to list all the ideas they wrote about above on the blackboard. Divide students into small groups to discuss the various ideas. Ask them to come up with one goal per group that they can all agree upon and to share their goals with the rest of the class. The whole class can work on formulating some steps that might assist in moving toward moving toward those goals.

Activity 30 - Leadership

What kind of leaders have we chosen in the past? Do we need different sorts of leaders in the future?

Begin by reviewing the qualities of leadership which the class came up with in Activity 25 - Rating the Candidates. Consider specific leaders this country has elected in the past. (George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, James K. Polk, Abraham Lincoln, Henry Clay, William Jennings Bryan, Woodrow Wilson, Herbert Hoover, Huey Long, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Joseph McCarthy, Clare Boothe Luce, Dwight Eisenhower, Richard Nixon, John F. Kennedy, Julian Bond, Jeannette Rankin, Andrew Young, Jimmy Carter, Barbara Jordan, Ronald Reagan, etc.) What qualities does each embody? (military hero, laissez-faire, decisive, aggressive, conciliatory, moral, etc.) Look at other leaders who, though not elected to any office, have or had a large following. Consider Susan B. Anthony, Sojourner Truth, Eugene V. Debs, Dorothy Day, Eleanor Roosevelt, Martin Luther King, Jr., Jesse Jackson. How do these leaders differ from the previous group?

If you want to broaden this discussion, you can include non-US leaders such as Queen Victoria, V.I. Lenin, Mohandas Gandhi, Adolf Hitler, Winston Churchill, Charles DeGaulle, Juan Peron, Chou En-Lai,

Golda Meir, Kwame Nkrumah, Yassir Arafat, Margaret Thatcher. Students might choose one leader to research and present to the class. The presentation could take the form of a roleplay where each student becomes the leader and portrays the important aspects of that leader's life and style of leadership.

After research and discussion of the different kinds, of leaders have students look for any trends over the years. What kind of leaders will we need in the future?

For further reading:

Michael MacCoby, The Leader, New York, Ballantine Books, 1981.

APPENDIX A

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
Agenda for Security
Debates - Fall 1984

* CD: Congressional District

State	District	League Affiliate
Alabama	CD 7	Mobile
Arizona	CD 5	Tucson
Arkansas	S	Arkansas
California	CD 6	Marin County
	CD 38	Diablo Valley
Colorado	Senate	
	CD 1,2,4,5	Metro Denver
Connecticut	CD 1,2,3 4,5,6	Connecticut State
Florida	CD 14	South Palm Beach County
Illinois	Senate	
	CD 13	Hinsdale
	CD 16	Rockford
Iowa	Senate	
Indiana	CD 3	South Bend Area
	CD 8,9	Bloomington
Kansas	Senate	
Kentucky	Senate	
	CD 3	Louisville
	CD 6	Richmond
Louisiana	CD 2	New Orleans
	CD 6	Baton Rouge
Massachusetts	CD 7	Stoneham
	CD 10	Hingham
Michigan	Senate	
	CD 6	Lansing Area
	CD 11	Marquette County
Minnesota	Senate	

Mississippi	Senate	
Missouri	CD 1,2,3	St. Louis
New Hampshire	Senate	New Hampshire
	CD 1,2	State
New Jersey	CD 5	Ridgewood
New Mexico	Senate	
	CD 1,2,3	New Mexico State
New York	CD 1,2,3, 4,5,8	Nassau County
	CD 6,8,13, 14,15,17	New York City
	CD 20	Westchester
	CD 24	Rensselaer County
	CD 30	Metro Rochester
North Carolina	Senate	
	CD 6	Greensboro
	CD 11	Asheville-Buncombe County
Ohio	CD 16	Canton Area
Oklahoma	Senate	
	CD 1,4	Oklahoma State
Oregon	CD 1	Portland
	CD 2	Klamath County
	CD 5	Smith/Farland
Pennsylvania	CD 7	Delaware County
	CD 8	New Hope Area
	CD 13	North Penn
	CD 15	Allentown
Rhode Island	Senate	
South Carolina	CD 1	Charleston
	CD 2	Columbia
Tennessee	Senate	
Utah	CD 2	Salt Lake
Virginia	Senate	
	CD 9	Montgomery County
Washington	CD 1,7,8	King County South

APPENDIX B

PRESS RELEASE GUIDELINES

* Early in the release include the time, date, place, participating groups, and the reasons for the event.

* Do not exaggerate information. Make it interesting. Define the two or three basic points you want to make and avoid extraneous information.

* Include some striking quotes to demonstrate support or need.

* Limit it to one page, if possible. Never exceed two pages. You can include additional pages of background material, but these should be clearly separate from the press release.

* Double-space and use wide margins. Use one side of the paper.

* Make it clear who is releasing the statement and who can be contacted for more information. Include names, addresses, and phone numbers of members of your group who can be contacted.

APPENDIX C

ELECTION ISSUES

The following are suggestions of election issues, phrased as questions, for students to consider. They are reprinted from Agenda for Security: Election '84 with permission from the League of Women Voters Education Fund. This brochure, which includes in depth discussion of these issues, is available from the League (1730 M Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036) for 85 cents a copy.

* What do you consider to be the most pressing international problems facing the United States over the next ten years?

* What guidelines should be used to determine defense spending levels?

* What should our country aim for in relations with the Soviet Union, and what policies will achieve this goal?

* What are the uses and limits of nuclear weapons in promoting US national security, and what actions should Congress take regarding strategic weapons?

* What should be the US policy in Central America?

* What are US interests in developing countries, and what strategies will promote those interests?

* How should the United States assert its leadership ininternational organization?

* What policies will improve the US trade deficit situation over the long term?

* What responsibility does Congress have in the development of US foreign and military policy? How should elected officials keep the public informed about and involved in making decisions on these issues of global and national security?

APPENDIX D

THE LANGUAGE OF POLITICS

Objectives: One of the major stumbling blocks for anyone wanting to participate intelligently in the democratic process is the search for clear, balanced information concerning the political positions of candidates. Politicians, the media, and we ourselves often, whether consciously or unconsciously, misrepresent the truth by our choice of words and statistics. The following section is designed to introduce students to some general examples of how facts can be confused or hidden because of the manner in which they are expressed.

* Euphemism and circumlocution:

The dictionary definition of a euphemism is the substitution of an inoffensive term for one considered offensively explicit. Many euphemisms have become culturally accepted, especially concerning health and hygiene. But besides simply protecting our aesthetic sensibilities, euphemisms have evolved into tools by which the emotional reality of a term can be hidden. If a euphemism is used with a motive to conceal the truth, then it becomes a circumlocution, or an evasion or conscious use of indirect language. Have students consider the "Doonesbury" strip below:

DOONESBURY
By Garry Trudeau
MR. HARRIS, I'VE BEEN LOOKING OVER YOUR ACADEMIC TRANSCRIPT, AND I'VE BEEN TRYING TO FIND THE RIGHT WORD TO DESCRIBE YOUR CAREER HERE...
"DISGRACED" COMES TO MIND, OF COURSE. "DISASTROUS" ALSO SUGGESTS ITSELF, AS DOES "CATASTROPHIC."
HOW ABOUT "COLORFUL"? OR, PERHAPS, "REMARKABLE"?
YES, THOSE ARE APPLICABLE. "COLORFUL" CERTAINLY REFLECTS THE SPIRIT OF YOUR RECORD, AND WHO COULD ARGUE WITH "REMARKABLE"?
AND INDEED?
AND YET, "CATASTROPHIC" STAYS WITH ME...
YOU'RE FLOATING. PUT IT ASIDE FOR AWHILE...

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In analyzing this subtle technique, however, it is necessary to realize that whether a term is a euphemism or not often depends on one's relative vision of the truth. What one person considers a euphemism, another might sincerely believe to be a more accurate description. For example, the substitution of "peacekeeper" for the term "MX Missile" is considered by those opposing a nuclear arms buildup as an obvious attempt to cloak a dangerous and destabilizing weapon with an acceptable term in order to win public approval. On the other hand, one who believes that new and more sophisticated nuclear weapons are necessary to prevent war might see "peacekeeper" as a more apt name for the MX.

"Warhead sounds so negative. Let's call it a nuclear peacehead."

You might point out, however, that one reason why the military is often accused of using euphemisms is because the reality that military officials must deal with is an unpleasant one. "Peace through strength", for example, is a strategy which does consider the use of force; thus, the loss of human life is a variable. Euphemisms are not necessary to gain public support for a peace through disarmament platform since the act of disarming is not unpleasant in and of itself. What might occur after disarmament, however, is still open to debate. The best means of maintaining peace is not for this guide to resolve. But it is important to take into consideration that because a method might be an unpleasant one, it does not necessarily become any less effective.

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1) To begin having students understand the use of euphemisms and circumlocution, have them engage in roleplaying the following situations: a concerned parent and his or her child who has dropped out of high school discussing the pros and cons of his "less structured" lifestyle; a police officer and a driver discussing what constitutes "reckless" driving; or two art critics discussing their differing opinions about a sculpture. Refer back to the "Doonesbury" strip and see how many differing explanations and euphemisms the students can dream up.

2) Have students think up terms which might be considered euphemisms. Some subjects on which they could focus are listed below with possible examples listed. Encourage students to discuss whether these terms are used simply to avoid offensive terms or to hide the truth for personal or political advantage:

* Life at school
"negative reinforcement" = punishment
"constructive repetition" = busy work
"encourage integration" = busing
"have a talk with the principal" = get scolded

* Hygiene and Health
"passed away" = died
"no longer with us" = dead
"under the weather" = sick
"john" = toilet
"powder room" = bathroom

If you are brave enough, you can let your students take it from here!

* Vietnam War: To soften public criticism of the war effort, the administration described unpopular events in a less obvious manner.

"redeployment of American troops" = retreat
"pacification centers" = civilian detention camps
"protective reaction strikes" = bombing
"resource control program" = burning of forests and farms

* Watergate: During this historical episode several government officials used euphemisms to avoid admitting they did anything immoral or illegal.

"inappropriate act" = an illegal act
"electronic surveillance" = illegal wire tapping
"containing the situation" = cover-up
"increments in the form of currency" = bribes
"statement no longer operative" = a lie

* Using Emotions to Distract:

While euphemisms can be used to hide reality, emotional tactics can do as much damage to the search for substantive truth. While emotions play important roles in understanding issues, when manipulated for political or personal gain they can hurt the reasoning process. Use the ideas below to help your students understand these concepts:

1) Emotional appeals -- a very common technique used by politicians is to appeal to the voters' patriotism. Flag waving speeches with little or no substance can sway thousands of voters. Have the class study the use of emotional appeals in their own lives. For instance, how do they use emotion by drawing on the sympathy of others to get their own way? Look at advertising and analyze emotional appeals used to lure consumer dollars. Consider charity organizations as well.

2) Personal attacks -- Quite often, differences of opinion can be so great that discussions turn into arguments. As those involved get more insistent that their own views are correct, frustration and desire to beat their opponent often override the concern to learn or grow. This can lead to the use of any means, including insults. These insults often have nothing to do with the issue, but do hurt the feelings or popularity of a rival. Have your students think about the last three or four arguments they have had. Did any include personal insults? How did they affect the discussion?

3) Name-calling: In a classic case, one politician won an election because he alleged that his opponent "once matriculated" and that his opponent's wife was a "thespian." Aside from the ignorant and the absurd, inflammatory statements can be just as damaging. A candidate might, for example, call an opponent's behavior "wishy-washy" or "two-faced" when it should more accurately be described as flexible or responsive. Don't be sidetracked, either, by attacks on a candidate based on family, ethnicity, gender, race, or personal characteristics that don't make a difference in performance.

4) Baiting: Politics is a tough game, but badgering and intimidation are unfair campaign tactics. Think twice about a candidate who tries to make an opponent look weak or out of control by harassment until he or she flies off the handle and says something rash.

5)Rumor-mongering: Watch for the unsubstantiated statement or innuendo. Have you ever heard quotes like these in a political campaign? "Although everyone says my opponent is a crook, I have no personal knowledge of any wrongdoing." "I can't speak for Riley and Baker, but I never would have awarded such a low-interest loan to an out-of-state builder." "I've heard that Jones is soft on communism." Legal perhaps, but dirty campaigning. Such "dark hints" can sway an election, if voters are unwary, long before a fair-campaign investigation or slander suit can put a stop to them.

* Oversimplification:

In our fast paced society, where time is at a premium, it is sometimes necessary to condense lengthy explanations of complex ideas. But when practical condensing becomes oversimplification, the true meaning of an idea can get lost. Oversimplification can take many forms and can be used to distort facts and manipulate other people.

"The Secretary of State assures me, My Fellow Americans, that we are the good guys and they are the bad guys."

One of the simplest forms of oversimplification is "stretching the truth" or exaggeration. By lying, however indirectly, we can gain advantage. But when the exaggerations are general in nature, it is nearly impossible to accuse someone of lying. The "white lie" has become an acceptable, and occasionally a suggested, tactic for not hurting someone's feelings or for getting out of a commitment. Have the class discuss when they or their parents exaggerate the facts to try to prove a point in a domestic discussion.

Listed below are terms often used when talking about national security and the nuclear arms race. Discuss with students whether or not they are exaggerations or how the possibility might arise of exaggeration in their use:

1) "Holocaust" means the complete destruction of people by fire, used to refer to the Nazi mass murder of Jews and others in World War II. A nuclear war, however, might not destroy ALL people in an area, as the term seems to imply.

2) "Window of Vulnerability" refers to a gap between the number of US and USSR weapons, implying that the gap is large enough for the USSR to attack us while we are helpless. The differences in our arms supply, however, might balance out in the end, so that there is no "gap."

3) "The Domino Theory" refers to the idea that if one country "falls" to the communists, the momentum of its falling will cause nearby countries to "fall" to communism after it. Since each country is different, however, it might be the economic, political, and social conditions that determine whether a country will become communist, not just the example of a neighboring country becoming communist.

4) "Extinction of the Species" refers to the theory that multiple detonations in a nuclear war could destroy the ozone layer which would make the earth uninhabitable for human beings and perhaps even for all animals and plants. This possibility, however, is theoretical and the effect of nuclear blasts on the ozone may be minor.

5) "Free World" is used to describe non-communist governments. Not all non-communist governments allow freedoms Americans consider essential, such as the freedom to vote, to be entitled to a jury trial, or to speak out freely; conversely, not all communist governments prohibit all these freedoms.

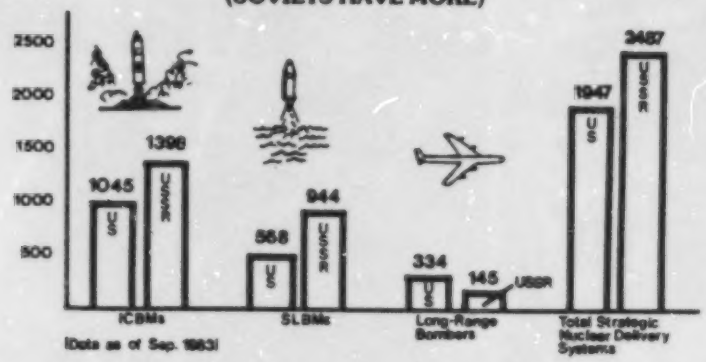
6) "Missile Gap" implies a "hole" in our "armor" of weapons in the same way that "window of vulnerability" does.

7) "Armageddon" refers to the last decisive battle between good and evil just before the Judgment Day, according to the Christian Bible. A nuclear war may not be extensive enough to be compared to a final judgment day, however.

A second type of oversimplification which is closely related to exaggeration is <u>statistical distortion</u>. A false assumption that can creep into any discussion or debate is that if someone is proficient in citing numbers and statistics, then his argument must be solid. Filmmakers and speechwriters, for example, often use statistics to sway viewers, and they are particularly effective in this medium because films and speeches do not lend themselves to close scrutiny as easily as written arguments. Unquestioned statistics, however, can be as misleading as they can be helpful.

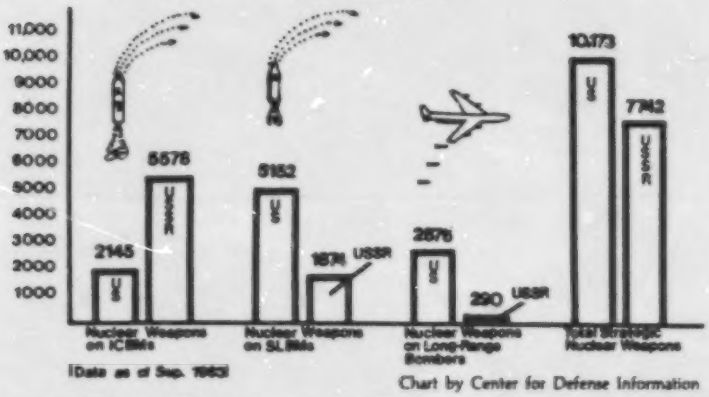
The most obvious method of distorting statistics is to collect many and then display only those which represent your opinion: selective sampling. The debate over who is ahead in the arms race is replete with examples of this. Freeze advocates select statistics which demonstrate the destructive potential of all nuclear weapons while often avoiding evidence showing recent Soviet build-ups, since that might justify a military build-up by the United States. President Reagan has stated that "on balance, the Soviet Union does have a definite margin of superiority," and has supported his belief with bar graphs of only those categories which agree with his conclusion. One major source of confusion is that each nation is stronger in different categories. The chart below, compiled by the Center for Defense Information, demonstrates this difference in one way.

CHART 2-U.S. AND SOVIET STRATEGIC NUCLEAR DELIVERY SYSTEMS
(SOVIETS HAVE MORE)



(Data as of Sep. 1983)

CHART 3-U.S. AND SOVIET STRATEGIC NUCLEAR WEAPONS
(U.S. HAS MORE)



(Data as of Sep. 1983)

Chart by Center for Defense Information

NOTE: Numerical accounts of delivery systems and weapons provide only one means of comparing nuclear capability. A detailed comparison would consider propulsion systems, accuracy of systems, reliability of systems, etc.

Despite an understanding of the complexity of the issues, statistics continue to be used in misleading ways. Study the diagram below:

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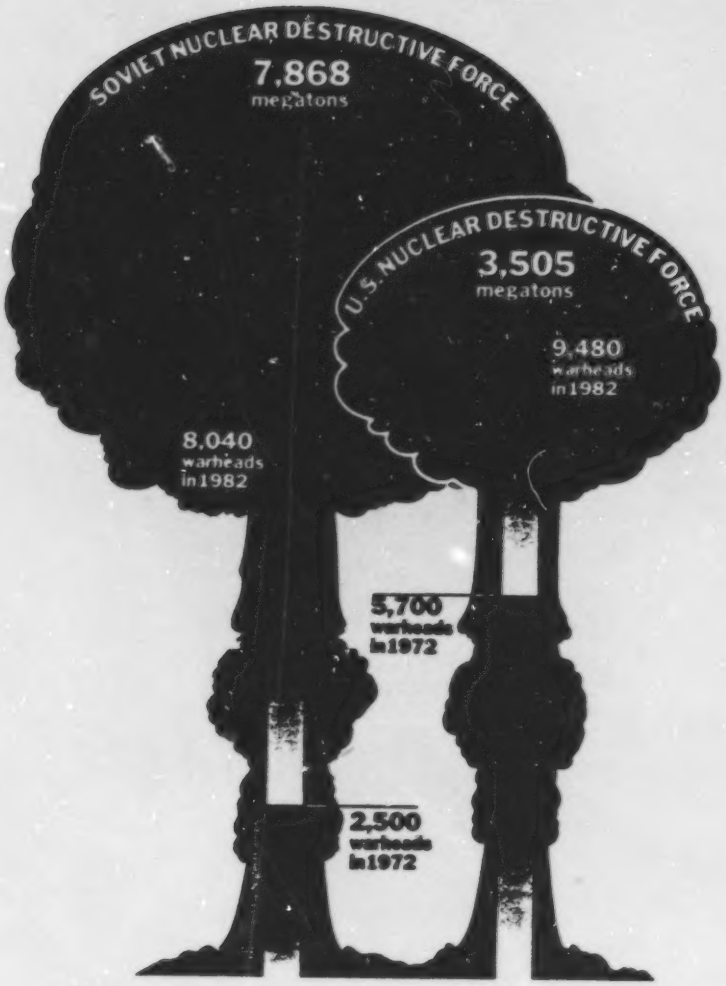

Have students discuss how to interpret this graph. Point out that the mushroom cloud portion shows megatonnage (explosive force) and the stem-shaped portion shows the number of US/USSR warheads. The cloud graph, taller and wider, looks more significant. However, number of warheads may be more significant than megatonnage since ability to spread explosive force to many targets accurately does not depend on megatonnage. Smaller, more numerous, and more efficient missiles may really determine true firepower.

A second method of distorting statistics, other than selective sampling, is slanting the questions used in public opinion polls. The way a question is phrased can elicit very different responses. Below are two mini-questionnaires. Split the class into two groups and give one Questionnaire A and the other Questionnaire B. Let one student in each group collect his or her group's responses and make a summary of the results and their implications. Discuss how the results could be manipulated for political purposes. Perhaps the class could then try to create a "neutral" questionnaire. Is it possible?

QUESTIONNAIRE A

1) Should America strive to be militarily stronger or weaker in the 1980's?

2) Should America be prepared to meet Soviet military challenges, or should we rely on talk and negotiation?

3) Are the Soviets generally friendly or are they trying to undermine U.S. interests?

4) Should we sacrifice our military security for social spending?

5) Should space weapons be considered or totally abandoned by research and development security teams?

QUESTIONNAIRE B

1) Should we continue to escalate the arms race or search for ways to slow it?

2) Should we try to talk with the Soviets about national security or rely on force to deal with them?

3) Are the Soviets bent on world domination or are they primarily interested in their security?

4) Should important social programs be sacrificed for more military spending?

5) Should we push ahead with the development of deadly space weapons and risk an arms race in space?

A final form of oversimplification includes stereotyping, labeling, and guilt by association. People tend to categorize and label each other because it is easier than thinking of the thousands of unique individuals we meet each year. Within our political system we label people as "right-wing" or "left-wing" to avoid the complexity of individual differences.

HOLD YOUR TICKETS UP PLEASE! LIBERALS TO THE LEFT, CONSERVATIVES TO THE RIGHT, MODERATES STRAIGHT AHEAD!
SEC 11
WHERE'S B.D. SITTING? ON THE FREE-MARKET SIDE?
UH-HUH.. MATTER OF FACT, LOOKS LIKE HE'S ALREADY UP THERE!
WHERE?
UP THERE-SECTION 12! SEE?.. WITH ALL THE ROWDIES!
CUT FEDERAL SPENDING! CUT FEDERAL SPENDING!
SEC 12

We feel at home with stereotypes because they offer us a consistent, ordered view of the world. Unfortunately, they also blind us to the realities of our complex situation as human beings in a heterogeneous society. Stereotypes end up over-simplifying and clouding political debate. Have your class brain-storm as many labels as possible related to politics and security issues and supplement that list with the following: alarmist, Nazi, right-winger, militarist, emotionalist, trigger-happy, idealist, anti-American, soft on communism, dove, Fascist, military industrial complex, hawk, utopian, reactionary, warmonger, peacenik, diehard liberal How might these words affect political debates? With such stereotypes established as a part of our common vocabulary, politicians can greatly burden an opponent by attaching a label to him. Discuss the concept of guilt by association as well. All candidates need a wide base of support, yet they are often criticized and labeled for doing so. What labels might be attached to a politician who has contact with, or extended support from: wealthy people, extreme liberals, unions, minorities, homosexuals, the business community, women, environmentalists, the military, et al. How would labels create difficulty for a candidate?

* Argument versus Discussion:

When stereotypes, labels, and personal insults enter into any discussion, there is a distinct possibility that the discussion will quickly become an argument. The primary difference between an argument and a discussion is that the former implies elements of competition and emotion while the latter relies on a more calm and open approach. Using the list below, discuss with your class which method is best for resolving problems and learning.

Argument	Discussion
Loud, angry, harsh tone of voice	Quiet, calm, even tone of voice
Interrupting	Letting the other personfinish a point before you start to speak
Changing the subject, using phony issues	Sticking to each point until you've worked through it
Insults, put-downs, and sarcasm	Treating the other person with friendliness and respect
Exaggeration (terrible, evil, never, everybody, always)	Using careful, exact words
Pushy or threatening body language	Using calm face and hand motions
Talking fast, rushing	Taking time

Thinking only of your next point instead of listening to the other person's idea	Listening carefully and seriously considering the other's views
Faking it if you don't know something; never admitting the other person has a good point	Saying "I don't know"if you don't Agreeing with the other person's good points.
The goal is to win	The goal is to find the truth
Playing the victim to make the other person feel guilty	Being clear and assertive about the situation
Mind reading, telling the other person how s/he feels	Asking the other person how s/he feels

* Assumptions and Biases:

In order to help your students begin to understand bias, begin with an examination of their own biases regarding their lifestyles. What are their assumed values that determine how they act and live? Begin with the most obvious ones,which they in fact may not feel are obvious because they never question them. Perhaps suggest the following as assumed values and concepts they may prize without question: life, love, freedom, security,pleasure, independence, companionship, beauty, and strength. Discuss whether these are universal values or not. Would a hermit care as much about companionship? Do people take certain values for granted because they have never been deprived of them?

From personal values, move on to national ones. What are broad American values? What might be Soviet values?...Chinese values?...the values of an aboriginal tribe in the Americas, Africa or Australia? Use the list below to supplement your discussion. Ask whether there are any "national" values, or is it unrealistic to use such broad stereotypes?

United States: progress, freedom, independence, free enterprise, liberty, justice, competition.

USSR: brotherhood and sisterhood, security, community, planned production, stability, cooperation.

A valuable method of analyzing American assumptions and bias is to examine your own history textbook. What values does your textbook imply? Do they reflect American values as you have discussed them? Type up the following passages without reference to their sources and have students comment on the assumptions and biases within each. Do they correctly presume the sources?

> In the post-war period the USA openly advanced its pretensions for 'world leadership'. Its course, aimed at the establishment of world supremacy of

> American monopolies and at the preparation of a war against the countries of the Socialist camp, was known as a policy 'from a position of strength'.
> (Soviet history textbook)

> The Americans of 1945 did not suppose, as so many had in 1918, that victory relieved them of further international responsibility. Many saw America's world role as historic opportunity. Some hoped to use American power to build a lasting structure of world peace and to advance the cause of liberal democracy.
> (The National Experience, American history textbook)

When discussing bias and assumption, however, be careful not to use the terms too negatively. It is very hard to escape bias completely. Some assumptions are only beginning to be questioned. War has for a long time been considered an acceptable means of resolving conflict. "US Today" pointed out that researchers who produced "Militarism in Textbooks" concluded that "none of the texts [studied] 'raised philosophical questions about the acceptability of war. War, as a social institution, goes unchallenged.'" Yet, many people might say that such criticism is moot due to a generally accepted assumption that war is bad, but sometimes necessary.

Since textbooks are secondary sources, authors are responsible for interpreting the significance of historical events, but can do so only through their own biases and assumptions. "How could World War II be interpreted so differently as in the examples above?" your students might ask. Discuss with them the fact that the Constitution has been interpreted differently on many issues, including civil and criminal rights, representation, taxation, and presidential versus congressional power. Point out that churches have warred against each other over differing interpretation of the same religious scriptures. Mention also that Karl Marx's "Communist Manifesto" has been used to defend many different systems and methods. When looking at the "facts," different groups can see very different things. As Walter Lippmann wrote in Public Opinion,

> The pattern of stereotypes at the center of our [social] codes largely determines what group of facts we shall see, and in what light we shall see them. That is why, with the best will in the world, the news policy of a journal tends to support its editorial policy; why a capitalist sees one set of facts, and certain aspects of human nature; his socialist opponent another set and other aspects, and why each regards the other as unreasonable or perverse, when the real difference between them is a difference of perception. (Walter Lippmann, Public Opinion, New York, The Free Press, 1965 [originally published in 1922], p. 82.)

To help answer your students' inevitable question, "How do I know what to believe?" give them the following five hints for analyzing presentation of material:

* Examine underlying assumptions, determine what is implied and what is not being said.

* Determine the objectivity of the presenter: what is the presenter's nationality, profession, affiliation?

* Determine the values of the presenter: what ends does s/he seek?

* Determine the level of the appeal: is it aimed at emotion and sympathy or intellect and reason?

* Examine the evidence: is there a balance of information, is it complete or selective?

For further reading:
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